

Emil Vlajki


KOSOVO – CRUCIFIED SERBIA



* Nikola Pašić *

THE NEW TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY

and
the Destruction
of Yugoslavia



the west
destruction of countries
humanitarian hypocrisy
increasing debts
economic sanctions
striking by chemical and radioactive weapons
impunity of the UN
Killing of civilians
informalism
breaking of all international law
humiliation of other nations and civilizations

Emil Vlajki



Emil Vlajki

KOSOVO - CRUCIFIED SERBIA

- Nikola Pašić * Belgrade, 2007.

"Emil Vlajki, expounds on the role of the outside powers, especially those of the United States, Britain and other NATO members, in promoting and aggravating the conflict and hatred among the peoples of the former Yugoslavia. No doubt, Slobodan Milosevic is much to blame for his rabble rousing nationalism, but ultimately the real mischief-makers and hate-mongers may be found among the media and leaders of the US and Britain. If the core problem of Yugoslavia was one of inter-ethnic hatred, revenge and retaliation, in the end . Western leaders, media and scholars proved to be the worst culprits in this respect.

Professor's Vlajki's book illustrates that the West did not attempt to solve the Yugoslav problem to minimize the tragedy, but instead embarked on their own rampage of hate, hysteria and military violence against the main ethnic group. This did not minimize the suffering of any ethnic group, but maximized that of everybody. The United States became the essence of the problem culminating in their illegal bombardment and destruction of Serbia d the Serbs. But of course, scholars such as Professor Vlajki will be dismissed as lunatics like myself."

(Raju G. C. Thomas, Marquette University)

"In Part II professor Vlajki reconstruct the process of disintegration of Yugoslavia. I have little to say here, except that it is the best analysis I have read to date. It is clear, balanced and destroys many myths. This is an excellent piece of work."

(Osvaldo Croci, Laurentian University)

Emit Vlajki, Croat by father and Jewish by mother, is a former professor of Political Science at Sarajevo University. Also visiting and associate professor at Yale, K.U. of Leuven, Laval University, University of Montreal, Ottawa University. During the eight months of war in Bosnia (1992) he was the co-president of the Red Cross of Sarajevo. In December 1992, he left Sarajevo heading the convoy of two thousand refugees to Belgrade.

1. *B. Kosovo: The Second Serb Defeat*
2. *Status of the Autonomous Provinces in post-war Yugoslavia*
3. *The 1974 Constitution*
4. *Escalation of Violence in the 1980*
5. *Systematic discrimination of non-Albanians*
6. *Serb backlash and constitutional amendments in 1989*
7. *Internationalization of Kosovo Problem and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*
8. *Kosovo,s Albanians Phantom State Seeking Recognition*
9. *Escalation of Kosovo Conflict after Dayton*
10. *The Final Stage: 'Bombing into Submission'*
11. *The Rambouillet trap*

B. Kosovo: The Second Serb Defeat

In 1389, Serbs were defeated on Kosovo which cost them 500 years of liberty. 600 hundred years later they have been defeated again by the most powerful military coalition in the world. The impression is that this time consequences could be worse than before. At any rate, for the last ten years, Kosovo served as a puppet of the "international community" and was used first to destroy Tito's Yugoslavia and then the federation of Montenegro and Serbia. Everything was done through the long and subtle game based on irreconcilable ethnic tensions existing between Serbs and ethnic Albanians. Only the history of this conflict can explain the ongoing tragedy that afflicts Serbs and Albanians equally.

The fact is that with the creation of Tito's Yugoslavia immediately after WW II, the Albanians in Kosovo enjoyed the same level of autonomy that is given to any ethnic minority living within a sovereign state. Moreover, for quite a long period (1969-1989) this autonomy largely exceeded world standards by creating de facto if not de jure an almost independent state of Kosovo. The second fact is that the Albanians in Kosovo never really wanted this autonomy. What they really wanted was secession from Serbia, which would permit them either to create an independent state, with possible annexation of parts of Macedonia, Montenegro and Southern Serbia inhabited also by an Albanian minority, or to become altogether part of a Greater Albania. So, for Kosovo's Albanians the question of autonomy was just one step towards the realization of their ultimate goal. The third fact is that the Albanian nationalism was used and abused by foreign powers, that is, to destabilize and finally to dismember Yugoslavia.

Status of the Autonomous Provinces in post-war Yugoslavia

When the Federate Republic of Yugoslavia was created immediately following WW II, it was conceived as a multiethnic state which would provide equal rights to all nationalities and minorities. Six republics were formed: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. Besides the republics, two other territorial entities were created: the Autonomous Regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo, both within the Republic of Serbia. Many authors (M. Vickers, H. Poulton, S. Woodward) consider the creation of these autonomous regions as a method employed by the Yugoslav government to deal with the question of eventual Serbian predominance over other nations, taking into consideration that the Serbs were the largest ethnic group, and also the one most dispersed over the whole territory of Yugoslavia. The invention of autonomous regions solved the problem of many ethnic minorities. There were in Vojvodina alone about ten different ethnic groups.

The new constitution of SFRY adopted in 1946, defined the Autonomous Regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo as integral parts of Serbia and therefore, their status was to be determined by the constitution of the Republic of Serbia. Article 103 of the 1946 constitution stated as follows:

"The People's Republic of Serbia includes within its structure the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija"²⁴⁾ As far as Kosovo was concerned, by defining it as autonomous region, the Yugoslav government was hoping that it would at the same time resolve the problem of strong Albanian nationalism. During WW2, the Albanians openly collaborated with the Fascist occupation forces (the Ballist movement).

Immediately after the liberation of Kosovo by the Yugoslav Partisans in 1944, there had been an uprising of Albanians against the NLA (National Liberation Army). The leader of the uprising Imer Berisha, "*advocated the union of Kosovo and Western Macedonia with Albania.*"²⁵⁾ Once the insurgency was suppressed, and in spite of the strong secessionist movement, Kosovo was still granted the status of autonomous region according to the 1946 constitution.

"For the first time Albanians were recognized as a distinct national group; their language was recognized as one of Yugoslavia's official languages and Albanians gained the right to education in the vernacular."²⁶⁾

In the post-war period many progressive cultural and social reforms were undertaken by the federal government regarding the Albanian population in Kosovo, such as opening Albanian-language schools, publishing Albanian newspapers, setting up of numerous cultural and educational *societies, theatres and reading rooms*. "*In 1950 Kosovo had 258 such societies with 3,150 members.*"²⁷⁾ Albanian women, traditionally subordinated to a strong patriarchal family structure, were encouraged to go to school and were provided a better social position for themselves. The youth were motivated to pursue higher education by being awarded scholarships and other benefits.

The 1950s and 1960s were marked by efforts of the federal government to promote the principles of "Brotherhood and Unity" between all the nations, to discourage any form of nationalist tendencies. At that time the tensions between the republics were already beginning to menace federal unity. The more developed republics, Croatia and Slovenia, protested the significant transfer of their wealth to the underdeveloped regions, mostly Kosovo,²⁸⁾ and against reinforcement of state centralism. In order to appease the increasing discontent of the republics, the federal government inaugurated a system of polycentrism with the promulgation of a new constitution in 1963. The republics were given even more rights, considering their status as constitutive elements of the Federation. As far as autonomous regions were concerned, they ceased to be essentially federative units and became:

[...] 'socio-political communities within the republic [of Serbia] or 'juridical creations' of the Republican constitution."²⁹⁾ Even so, the juridical status of Kosovo was upgraded: it was no longer a Region but a Province like Vojvodina; the number of its representatives in the Federal Chamber of Nationalities increased from four to five (Vojvodina having six), and a section of Serbia's supreme court was established in Pristina as had previously been done in Vojvodina. Moreover, the 1963 constitution replaced the term "national minority" with "nationality". The Albanians in Kosovo were not satisfied with these changes. On the contrary, Albanian nationalism began to expand rapidly, at first rather "modestly" by displaying here and there the Albanian flag over the cities of Kosovo, but then more aggressively with street demonstrations and clashes with the police. The real boost for Albanian separatist demands was the removal of Alexander Rankovic, Vice President of Yugoslavia and head of the security police. It is out of

fear of 'Greater Serbian' tendencies that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia revoked in 1966 Rankovic (considered as a proponent of Serbian centralism). The Federal government found an effective *measure against Serbian nationalism: the creation of "[...] new conditions for the many-faceted affirmation of Albanian nationality.*"³⁰⁾ Indeed, the Kosovo Albanians profited out of this "open-mindedness" and began immediately to press for more autonomy. In November 1968 large-scale demonstrations were organized in Pristina by Albanian students with demands for granting Kosovo the status of a republic. Soon after, these demonstrations spread throughout Kosovo and crossing the border into Macedonia. Demands for a republican status were far from naive, and was just a necessary step towards complete secession:

"To grant such a republic was officially seen as being merely the first stage towards the unification of Kosovo province, and other regions inhabited by ethnic Albanians especially in Macedonia, with neighboring Albania, an aim explicitly formulated by a minority of Albanian nationalists."³¹⁾

The federal government was willing, in order to calm down the Albanian revolt, to make further concessions. In December 1968 it adopted new constitutional amendments which accorded significant increase in autonomy for both Kosovo and Vojvodina. It was established that the Provinces should have their own constitutions. All legislative and judicial authority would be transferred to the Provinces, and they would have direct representatives in the federal parliament. Kosovo was also given the right to fly an Albanian flag, and the term "Metohija" contained in the official name of the Province was abandoned. It is also important to mention the setting up of an Albanian University in Pristina, which would soon become the most fertile ground for the Albanian intelligentsia's nationalist movement.³²⁾

²⁴⁾ Miranda Vickers: *Between Serbs and Albanians. A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 147. ²⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁶⁾ Hugh Poulton: *The Balkans. Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publication, London, 1993, p. 59.

²⁷⁾ Miranda Vickers: *Between Serbs and Albanians. A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 153.

²⁸⁾ In 1965 the Federal Fund for the Accelerated Development of the Underdeveloped Regions was created. "This fund received 1.85 per cent of each republic's gross social product for exclusive redistribution to the less developed regions. Kosovo received more than 40 per cent of these resources, which provided more than 70 per cent of the province's investment capital and about 70 per cent of its budget in 1971-5." (Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 158.).

²⁹⁾ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 161.

³⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

³¹⁾ Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans. Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publications, London, 1993, p. 60.

³²⁾ "The setting up of an Albanian university in Pristina, capital of Kosovo, in 1968 and the huge number of Albanian students who enrol there, in part due to the acute unemployment problem in Kosovo, helped create a large Albanian intelligentsia with little outlet in terms of job opportunities for them; in 1984 unemployment in Kosovo was 29.1% compared to 12.7% national average and only 1.8% in Slovenia. In addition in Kosovo, 70% of those unemployed were aged 25 years or under. [...] Unsurprisingly Pristina university became a breeding ground for nationalist."¹ Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans. Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publications, London, 1993, p. 60-61.

The 1974 Constitution

"Before, especially from 1974-1990, we had a good life. Albanians were dominant, because they were in Yugoslavia but only nominally in Serbia. They enjoyed substantial autonomy. Kosovo participated in the federation in the same way as the republics. It had a parliament, constitution, supreme court, constitutional court, and financial independence. The main body was the presidency, and Kosovo was represented there with one person, just as Serbia or Croatia. In the parliament, Albanians had the right

of veto, so nothing could be decided without them. Kosovo was a kind of stable state." (Fehmi Agani, one of the last moderate Kosovar Albanian leaders, granted this interview just days before the Rambouillet accord collapsed. He was assassinated May 6.

Further movement towards decentralization resulted in the adoption of a new Yugoslav constitution on 21 February 1974. Thus, the Republics were given more extensive powers over the federation. Article 3 defined the Socialist Republic as:

"[...] states based on the sovereignty of the people and the power of and self-management by the working class and all the working people, and are socialist, self-managing democratic communities of working people and citizens, and of nations and nationalities having equal rights"³³⁾

The Republics reached such a level of independence that they almost acquired a status of confederal units. They had the right to self-determination, leading to the right to separation, while the Provinces were given de facto republican status. Kosovo and Vojvodina were from now on considered as two of eight constitutive units of the Yugoslav federation. They had direct representatives in the Federal Chamber and the Chamber of Republics and Provinces of the Yugoslav Assembly. The two autonomous provinces had the right to propose laws on a federal level, and they had the right to veto any proposal or decision on either republican or a federal level that they considered affecting their vital interests. This meant that the Provinces could easily block any decision coming from the Serbian government, given that:

"The governments of Vojvodina and Kosovo could veto any policy from Belgrade that applied to the entire territory, while Serbia proper had no equivalent power over decisions within the two provinces."³⁴⁾

On the judicial level they had their independent representatives in the Yugoslav federal court and the constitutional court. The Republic of Serbia lost complete control over two of its integral parts, and was officially forbidden to intervene in any way in Provincial affairs.

"The Province had its own national bank. Supreme Court and independent administration under the supervision of the provisional executive council and provisional presidency. In other areas, including economic policy, taxation, education and culture, the Republic of Serbia was empowered to pass legislation valid for the entire Republic only with the prior approval of the assembly of the Province"³⁵⁾(emphasis mine,E.V.)

Finally, the only important difference between the status of a province and that of a republic was that provinces had no right of self-determination leading to secession. One would think that the increased level of political, economic and cultural independence should be sufficient to appease even the most exigent autonomy demands, but that was not the case. New Albanian demonstrations broke out immediately after adoption of the 1974 constitution, with students demanding republican status for Kosovo and the union of all Albanian inhabited territories in Macedonia and Montenegro with Kosovo. Different forms of nationalist agitation, such as street demonstrations, open confrontation with the authorities, illegal activities of numerous underground separatist organizations, forbidden distribution of leaflets and other publicity material, all this aggressive nationalist propaganda would continue and even intensify throughout the 1970s, culminating in the 1980s after Tito's death.

Yet on the other hand, the period from the late 1960s to the late 1980s was surely the most

flourishing for the cultural, political and social status of Kosovo Albanians. Not only did they have predominantly Albanian provincial political leadership and police, but Albanian predominance spread to virtually all dimensions of social life: Albanian language in official use, in schools, universities, educational programs based essentially on textbooks imported from Tirana, Albanian television, radio and press, priority given to Albanians in employment, Albanian judges in provincial courts, and so on. Kosovo Albanians themselves were quite conscious of their advantaged position compared to other minority groups in the world, as some of them openly recognized:

"I have visited more than sixty countries and I have attended the most important conferences on these problems held in different parts of the world. I have come to the irrefutable conclusion as a result of this experience that not a single national minority in the world has achieved the rights that the Albanian nationality enjoys in Socialist Yugoslavia. The Albanian nationality exercises rights equal to those of the nations.

To quote but one datum, it has its own university. In the world, only the Hungarians in Romania and the Swedes in Finland have their own university; and it should be pointed out that while the University of Pristina is completely autonomous, similar universities in other countries do not enjoy full autonomy."³⁶⁾

³³⁾ Constitution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia.

³⁴⁾ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1995, p. 65.

³⁵⁾ M. Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, 1998, p. 179.

³⁶⁾ Dr Hajredin Hoxha, an Albanian professor at the University of Pristina, in an interview to a Croatian daily newspaper *Vjesnik*, on 9 May 1981; quoted in: Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, 1998, p. 193.

Escalation of Violence in the 1980

Kosovo Albanian secessionism found its expression through numerous illegal separatist organizations. The official news agency Tanjug reported that 72 such organizations having about 1000 members were discovered between 1981 and 1983 (Poulton, Vickers). The secessionist activity of these groups inside Kosovo was generously tolerated by the provincial Communist Party's leadership; most of the riots and demonstrations were in fact organized in close collaboration with illegal separatist groups and the Kosovo Party leaders. Albanian separatist claims were intensifying throughout the period of what was generally recognized as the most prosperous one regarding the autonomy of the Province. It seemed that achieving extensive autonomy for Kosovo Albanians "turned out to be a step not to *reconciliation between two communities but to their total separation*."³⁷⁾ One of the most active establishments to provide material and ideological resources for the nationalist unrest was the use of the Albanian language at Pristina University.³⁸⁾ It was there in March 1981 that the worst escalation of nationalist violence since 1968 started, triggered by complaints of a group of students over food and sleeping conditions. Kosovo had the highest ratio of students in all Yugoslavia: 274.7 per 1,000 habitants, compared with 194.9 for the rest of the Federation. Previously in 1978, on the occasion of celebrating the centennial of the League of Prizren³⁹⁾

Albanian euphoria over the festivities soon transformed into nationalist agitation, with illegal distribution of leaflets and open confrontations with the police. But the real trigger for the escalation of nationalist violence was the death of Tito in May 1980.

What began as "peaceful" demonstration of Albanian students at Pristina University on 11

March 1981, soon became violent and revealed its true objectives: students' demands for better living conditions changed rapidly into one principal request — republican status for Kosovo. Some called also for unifying with Albania. Soon after the demonstrators were dispersed by the police, protests broke out again on March 26th, April 1st and 2nd and May 18th with renewed aggressiveness:

"[...]Serb and Montenegrin citizens were beaten, their homes and businesses burned, and their shops looted. Kosovo's Serb population were now seriously alarmed. During the night of 15 March 1981, a mysterious fire destroyed much of the old guest house wing of the Pec Patriarchate, including the monks' living quarters, together with a quantity of books and furniture.

Serb public opinion was enraged by the fire and at the failure of the Kosovo police to arrest anyone for the act. According to the Albanians, however, the fire had only destroyed the convent of the Sisters at Pec [...] Albanian 'irredentists' [sic] were accused of causing the fire, but in a court investigation the Albanian Judge Hoti declared that it had been caused by an electrical fault" ⁴⁰⁾

The riots rapidly spread to all major cities in Kosovo and even to neighboring republics, where Albanian agitators called for an upsurge of the Albanian minority in Western Macedonia. A significant police force was needed (about 30 000) to break up the riots. In the aftermath, there were officially 11 people dead and few hundred wounded, but some sources, such as Amnesty International, reported even 300 persons killed.⁴¹⁾ To re-establish order in the Province the authorities had to declare natural law and a curfew was imposed. The University of Pristina was closed. At the end of 1983 about 2000 people were sentenced by the courts. The political leadership of the Kosovo Party was held responsible for not signaling earlier the unrest amongst the Albanian population, so the head of the Kosovo League of Communists Mahmut Bakalli was removed from his position. In the years to follow Albanian nationalism would continue to manifest itself through different means. Numerous underground separatist and terrorist organizations would continue to operate in Kosovo and abroad, especially throughout Western Europe. Other than preparing demonstrations and spreading nationalist propaganda material, they also organized assassinations and kidnappings of important people representing Yugoslavia abroad⁴²⁾, they smuggled arms, drugs, gold and money. It is well known and well documented that the separatist movement was financed mostly out of drug money.⁴³⁾ An important part of their strategy was to mobilize political and military international support for their cause, particularly through connections with the strong Albanian lobby in Germany, United States and Turkey:

"Already in the 1980s, Croatian and ethnic Albanian separatist lobbies had stepped up their efforts to win support abroad, notably in Germany and the United States, by claiming to be oppressed by Serbs [...] In Washington, the campaign on behalf of Albanian separatists in Kosovo was spearheaded by Representative Joe DioGuardi of New York, who after losing his Congressional seat has continued his lobbying for the cause. An early influential convert to the cause was Senator Robert Dole"⁴⁴⁾

It was in the early 1980s, following the death of Tito, that numerous Western institutions and media started to show an increased interest in further developments in Yugoslavia and Kosovo. Many Western politicians, public figures and journalists had already begun to sympathize with different nationalist "causes" in Croatia, Slovenia and Kosovo.

37) Diana Johnston in a recently published commentary untitled *NATO's Humanitarian Trigger*, on the web-site of Z Magazine, March 24, 1999.

38) "Drawing on a relatively modest store of past scholarship, largely originating in Austria, Germany or Enver Hoxha's Albania, studies in Albanian history and literature amounted above all to glorifications of Albanian identity. Rather than developing the critical spirit, they developed narrow ethnocentricity. Graduates in these fields were prepared above all for the carrier of nationalist political leader, and it is striking the number of literati among Kosovo Albanian secessionist leaders. Extreme cultural autonomy has created two populations with no common language." D.

Johnston in cited commentary *NATO's Humanitarian Trigger*, on the web-site of Z Magazine, March 24, 1999.

39) The League of Prizren was founded in 1878 as the beginning of the Albanian nationalist movement.

⁴¹⁾ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, 1998, p. 197-198.

⁴¹⁾ Quoted in: Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans. Minorities and States in Conflict*, Minority Rights Publications, London, 1993, p. 61.

⁴²⁾ "[...] terrorist activity committed by numerous Albanian organisations - the Red National Front (RNF); the Kosovar Union; the Movement for an Albanian Socialist Republic in Yugoslavia and the People's Movement for a Republic of Kosovo (MASRY) - continued throughout Western Europe. In August 1981, in Brussels, a member of the RNF, Musa Hoti, murdered Djeric Stojan and wounded Zuko Redzo, two Yugoslav consular officers. The following March two Yugoslavs were killed by Albanians in a Yugoslav club, again in Brussels. On 8. November 1987 in Stuttgart several members of MASRY planned the kidnapping of the Yugoslav Consul, Imer Klokci, but were prevented by German police [...] In May 1984 six Albanians were accused of smuggling arms, ammunition and explosives into Yugoslavia. Another group was arrested in March 1984 accused of causing nine explosions in Pristina between October 1982 and March 1984." Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 224-225.

⁴³⁾ Many distinguished newspapers published recently parts of classified documents linking the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to drugs and arms smuggling networks. For example, Ramesh Chandran reporting from Washington for The Times of India quoted The Washington Times on the classified US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) documents. According to these papers: "[...] drug agents in five countries, including the US, believe that the KLA has aligned itself with an extensive organised crime network centred in Albania that smuggles heroin and cocaine to buyers in Western Europe. [...] The DEA documents [...] maintain that the members of the notorious Albanian mafia have links to a 'drug smuggling cartel' based in Kosovo's capital Pristina. [...] The DEA documents apparently show it is one of the 'most powerful heroin smuggling organisations in the world' with much of the profits being diverted to the KLA to buy weapons." What is most cynical in the US policy towards KLA, according to Chandran is the fact that: "[...] as recently as 1998, the US State Department listed the KLA, formerly known as the 'Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves', or UCK, as an 'international terrorist organisation' accusing it of bankrolling its operations with proceeds from the international heroin trade and from loans' from terrorists like Osama Bin Laden - who heads Washington's 'most wanted' list. One unidentified drug official quoted in the report claims: They were terrorists in 1998 and now, because of politics, they're freedom fighters.' The DEA report also maintains [...] that the Kosovo traffickers were noted for their 'use of violence' and for their involvement in 'international weapons trafficking.' Ramesh Chandran, US-backed KLA linked to heroin network, say intelligence reports, The Times of India, Tuesday 4 May 1999.

⁴⁴⁾ Diana Johnstone, *Seeing Yugoslavia Through a Dark Glass: Politics, Media and the Ideology of Globalization*, *Covert Action Quarterly*, n° 65, Fall 1998.

Systematic discrimination of non-Albanians

Since the 1974 constitution Serbia had been almost paralyzed in its administrative, politic and economic functioning as a result of the constitutional rights given to the Provinces, notably the right to veto any republican decision. The situation had become unbearable especially for Serbs and Montenegrins living in Kosovo. They represented the largest ethnic groups other than Albanians. Because of their belonging to the "oppressor" nation (Montenegrins being considered as Serbs), they were exposed to increased discrimination and pressures to leave Kosovo. The slow but constant flow of Serbs and Montenegrins emigrating from the Province started before the 1960s, but it was after 1968. that the real exodus began. According to official census there were about 264.000 Serb and Montenegrins in Kosovo in 1961, which represented

about 28% of the total population; in 1971 this dropped to 20%, it further decreased to 14% by 1981 and by 1991 was down to 10%. Only in the period from 1971 to 1981, according to Serb sources, the number of Serbs and Montenegrins that left the province was 100,000.⁴⁵⁾ From 1981 to 1987 a further 20,000 had fled the region.⁴⁶⁾ On the other hand, the number of Albanians in the same period doubled, from about 646,000 in 1961 to 916,000 in 1971 and 1,200,000 by 1981, which in percentage terms represented a jump from 67% to 77% of the total population in a 20 year period. In 1991 the Albanization of Kosovo was almost complete, with 90% of the total population being ethnic Albanians. One should point out that the Albanians have the highest birth rate in Europe with 29.6 per 1,000 inhabitants.⁴⁷⁾

Some of the motives for this large Serb and Montenegrin departure from Kosovo resided in the fact that this was the poorest region of Yugoslavia, and people wanted to find better prospects elsewhere. However, the principal reason for Serb and Montenegrin mass-exodus was the unbearable atmosphere of tension and pressures put on them by the Albanians. The situation deteriorated in the early 1970s when the discrimination of Serbs and Montenegrins became institutionalized through a predominantly Albanian Party leadership, police, courts and administration. Non-Albanian ethnic groups were persecuted, menaced, violated and their lives and property endangered, they could not turn to the system's institutions to defend their rights. Many documents have been published on this subject. Reports from Helsinki Watch and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights confirmed that Serbs and Montenegrins were actually leaving Kosovo after experiencing intimidation, pressure, violence, and other severe abuses of human rights because of their ethnicity.⁴⁸⁾

Throughout the institutional system, Albanians practiced employment discrimination, confrontations in the working place, dragging out administrative procedures regarding complaints, investigations, issuing drivers licenses, non-application of judiciary and police decisions. Finally, cultural and religious discrimination consisted in language discrimination, closing Serb schools,

imposing exclusively Albanian educational programs. In the media were only representing Albanian point of view. One could also notice the destruction and desecration of cultural monuments and cemeteries, and especially violence against Orthodox church and its property, even physical aggression and rape perpetrated on Orthodox nuns, as in the case of the Pec Patriarchate.⁴⁹⁾ It is not difficult to see how this situation of ethnic tension and everyday pressure could mount to a widespread feeling of insecurity and fear among Serbs and Montenegrins. Not only had they been the object of a systematic discrimination, but they could not find justice through the legal institutions, as they were all run by Albanians. As a result, they began to organize themselves and in mid-1980s there was a significant Serbian movement in Kosovo demanding republican and federal protection for Serbs, Montenegrins and other non-Albanians in the province.

⁴⁵⁾ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, 1998, p. 195.

⁴⁶⁾ Georgje Aleksiev, *Terrorisus Serbes et Montenegrins fuient le Kosovo, Balkan, n° 9*, Janvier-mars 1991, řd. Sociřtř de Diffusion et de Production d'Informations Internationales. Paris, 1991, p. 42.

⁴⁷⁾ Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, 1998, p. 171.

⁴⁸⁾ The reports from Helsinki Watch and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights *Yugoslavia: Crisis in Kosovo*, March 1990, and *From Autonomy to Colonisation: Human Rights in Kosovo, 1989-1993*, November 1993, were quoted in: Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian. A History of Kosovo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 220.

⁴⁹⁾ The study produced by SANU was quoted in: Georgje Aleksiev, *Terrorises Serbes et Montřnřgrins fuient le Kosovo, Balkan, n° 9*, Janvier-mars 1991, řd. Sociřtř de Diffusion et de Production d'Informations Internationales, Paris, 1991, pp. 45-53. For more information on Serbs and Montenegrins being discriminated in Kosovo see also: Kosta Christitch, *Kosovo: le noeud de la crise Yougoslave, Balkan, n°2*, avril-may-juin 1989, řd. Sociřtř de Diffusion et de Production d'Informations Internationales, Paris, 1989, pp. 67-81.

Serb backlash and constitutional amendments in 1989

The first organized protests of Serbs from Kosovo began in early 1986, when some 100 Serbs arrived in Belgrade to appeal to Serbian and Yugoslav leadership for protection and better treatment.

These protest marches were about to become very frequent in the following years and they would further increase the Serbian public's awareness of the grievances of their compatriots in Kosovo. There was already a favorable climate in Serbia for some constitutional changes that would allow the republic to regain control over all its regions. It was evident that the 1974 constitution crippled the economic, political, judiciary and administrative integrity of Serbia as a whole. Serbian intellectuals began to denounce the partition of the Serbs as the largest nation throughout Yugoslavia, the territorial division of Serbia, the terror in Kosovo which left this province, once the cradle of the Serbian state, almost totally devoid of Serbs. They openly claimed that Serbia should regain control over its provinces and demanded strengthening of the federal government.⁵⁰⁾ On the other hand, the federal Party's leadership, who were always fearful of Serbia, saw in Kosovo's Serb and Montenegrin protest marches a danger that could spread into a larger Serbian nationalist movement, so it attempted to suppress them. On several occasions, beginning in late 1986, thousands of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo would gather in front of the Federal Assembly in Belgrade only to be dispersed by federal police.

Others were prevented from coming to Belgrade to demonstrate. However, there was enough understanding on the federal level of the gravity of the Kosovo problem and how it could endanger the stability and integrity of the whole country. The atrocities performed by Albanian separatists were becoming more frequent and vicious,⁵¹⁾ the Albanian leadership was becoming more openly chauvinistic,⁵²⁾ and the attacks on everything that still represented the unity of the federation increased.⁵³⁾ Moreover, the republics began to dispute a solution for the Kosovo problem, with Slovenia and Croatia, having a mutual interest in keeping Serbia weak, increasingly displaying support for the "Albanian cause". On the federal level decisive steps were taken to solve the Kosovo question:

"In 1987 and 1988, entire sessions of the LCY central committee were devoted to the problem. The Kosovo party committee was purged. On October 25, 1987, the federal state presidency suspended the authority of the provincial police and judiciary, dispatching federal police units in their place.⁵⁴⁾

Meanwhile, the state presidency was preparing the proposition for constitutional changes and the debate on the draft amendments began in February 1987. These changes aimed to provide the strengthening of the federal government to carry on with the economic reform. In some way, state leadership was forced into these constitutional changes by the International Monetary Fund negotiating team who tied the approval of further economic aid (credits) to a very specific set of political conditions:

"The IMF team told federal representatives that the IMF and the World Bank were ready to support Yugoslavia substantially in a thorough reform of the financial system and the structural changes necessary to a supply response. In return, however, Yugoslavia [...] must undergo 'radical surgery and a long period of rehabilitation'. [...] they were conditioning new credits on constitutional change: a strengthened federal administration and a change in the voting rules of the central bank from consensus to majority. Their assumption was that these changes would restore the government's capacity to establish monetary discipline and to repay debt."⁵⁵⁾

The ongoing political reform was to further complicate relations between the republics, as well as those between federal and republican governments. At the core of the reform was the abandonment of the system of "polycentric statism", as the principal cause of the economic

disintegration and growing nationalism; but the Slovene and Croatian governments were against what they saw as a reduction of the sovereignty of their republics. On the other hand, Serbia was more interested in stronger federal institutions and the control over the Autonomous Provinces. Still, the new federal constitution could not be adopted without the prior approval of all the republics. For this reason the federal government had to make some concessions to republican claims. Thus, Slovenian and Croatian demands were met by retaining the principle of consensual decision making in federal political councils, while Serbia was permitted to restore its integrity by reducing the excessive autonomy in Kosovo and Vojvodina.⁵⁶⁾ When the revised federal constitution was finally adopted in November 1988, Serbia had already received the green light to go on with its republican constitutional changes. Throughout 1987 and 1988 massive demonstrations shattered Serbia, starting from small groups of Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins protesting in front of the Federal Assembly, and spreading to so called "peoples meetings" from hundreds and up to 1 million people who gathered to demand the replacement of provincial leaderships. In 1987 the leading politician in Serbia was Slobodan Milosevic, the new head of the Communist party, who knew how to profit from these populist movements and turn them to his own advantage. His first objective was essentially the reunification of Serbia. With the enormous popularity within the Serb people, he was the only one "fit for the job". However, it was the federal party Central Committee that made the first move by approving the Serbian constitutional amendments. In October 1988, under mounting pressure from mass demonstrations, both provincial governments resigned and were replaced with a new leadership. In November the LCY expelled two main Kosovo party leaders, Azem Vllasi and Katsusa Jasari. Albanians in Kosovo reacted immediately with mass demonstrations. They wanted at all costs to keep the advantages they had by the 1974 constitution. As a result, the province was placed under a state of emergency and a curfew was imposed. Serbia adopted its constitutional amendments in March 1989. According to the revised constitution, Serbia regained direct control over its provinces' defense, security and judiciary system, as well as over financial and social planning.

"The new constitution defined the status of the provinces as 'a form of territorial autonomy', whereby they were given the right to create their own statutes, but with the prior agreement of the National Assembly. The southern province was again to be named Kosovo and Metohija. [...] the rights of the provinces were to be prescribed in the constitution of the Serbian Republic. Furthermore, the controversial constitutional provisions of 1968, 1971 and 1974 were made null and void."⁵⁷⁾

The only goal of the Serbian leadership was to restore its sovereignty in three crucial domains: defense, security and justice, and finally to prevent the possible secession of Kosovo. In all other domains the province enjoyed a great deal of autonomy: language, culture, education, economy, local administration.

However, the international community condemned these changes labeling them as the "instrument of Serb oppression" (Diane Johnston). Three main factors *were deliberately ignored*:

"[...] these changes were widely supported in Serbia as necessary to enable the realization of the economic liberalization reforms; they were enacted legally; and they left intact the political rights of ethnic Albanians as well as a considerable degree of regional autonomy. One can only speculate to what extent, without the prospect of decisive outside intervention on their behalf the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo might have tried to make use of the existing legal framework."⁵⁸⁾

It should be stressed that the decisive move to reduce Kosovo's and Vojvodina's autonomy as well as to approve Serbian constitutional amendments was instigated by the federal state government, who were pressured into it by the IMF's strict conditions. As for the standing of the "international community" on this subject, it pronounced itself in favor of Yugoslav integrity. It was only with the shifting US tactics towards Yugoslavia in 1989, that "suddenly" it became supportive of the Albanian cause. In fact, US opposition to the "repression against *Albanians*":

"[...] focused publicity on the government of Serbia to press for respect for Albanian human rights. [...] When pressure did focus on the federal government at the end of 1990 and early 1991 it took the form of economic sanctions that further undermined its dwindling authority. This cumulative pressure therefore favored the nationalist rather than the civic definition of the Kosovo problem [...] and strengthened the trend of European states to ignore the federal government and talk directly to the leaders of the republics."⁵⁹⁾

Not only was this policy in contradiction with the US formal declaration that Yugoslavia should be kept together, but *the policy to protect Albanian rights*

"[...] was in direct contradiction to the pressures from the IMF and the banking consortium organized by the US State Department to decentralize monetary control and create more effective economic administration — a primary reason for the Serbian constitutional revision reducing its provinces' autonomy/⁶⁰⁾

⁵⁰⁾ In the infamous draft document *Memorandum* written by SANU and made public in 1986, the intellectual opposition in Serbia denounced "the physical, political, legal and cultural genocide of the Serbian population of Kosovo and Metohija. [...] The Albanization of Kosovo and Metohija has been prepared in perfect legality. In the same way, the unification of the literary language, of the name of the nation, of the flag and of the schoolbooks with those of Albania following Tirana's instructions, was done in a way quite as open as the border between the two countries." (Diana Johnston, *Notes on the Kosovo Problem and the International Community*, article published on Internet). The *Memorandum* predicted quite well that in no less than ten years Kosovo would be ethnically pure Albanian, which indeed happened in 1999. Highly criticised at the time as a manifesto of Serbian nationalism, its following warnings seem more than realistic in the light of recent events: "if genuine security and equality under the law for all peoples living in Kosovo and Metohija are not established, if objective and lasting conditions are not created favouring the return of the people driven out (Serbs and Montenegrins, E.V.), that part of the Republic of Serbia will become a European problem with very grave consequences." (*Ibid.*)

⁵¹⁾ Newspapers reported of incidents such as the one implicating a young Albanian who splashed gasoline in the face of a 12-year-old Serbian boy and ignited it with a match (The New York Times, November 9, 1982); amongst many cases of rape, ones that involved small children were the most vicious and they triggered waves of protests amid Kosovo's Serbs and Montenegrins: "The recent attempt by a 17-year-old Albanian to rape a 10-year-old girl from the Jakovljevic family in the Kosovo village of Plemetina was the direct cause of today's [3rd November] arrival by a group of more than 150 locals of Serbian and Montenegrin nationality from this and surrounding villages in Pristina Municipality at the SFRY Assembly." *BBC Summary of World Broadcast*, November 10, 1986.

⁵²⁾ "in one incident, Fadil Hoxha, once the leading politician of ethnic Albanian origin in Yugoslavia, joked at an official dinner in Prizren last year that Serbian women should be used to satisfy potential ethnic Albanian rapists. After his quip was reported this October, Serbian women in Kosovo protested, and Mr. Hoxha was dismissed from the Communist Party." David Binder in *The New York Times*, November 1, 1987 ⁵³⁾ One such institution was the Yugoslav People's Army, "the largest recipient of federal funds and the only economic institution that, by federal jurisdiction and the structure of defense production and planning, was all-Yugoslav." (Woodward, 1995, p. 87.) After the notorious case of Aziz Kelmendi, an ethnic Albanian Army conscript who in 1987 shot down four of his bunkmates and wounded six others while they were sleeping, all of the victims being of Slavic origin, the situation in the Army spread panic in the nation. The federal Secretary for National Defense at the time, Fleet Adm. Branko Mamula reported a few weeks later that: 'Between 1981 and 1987 a total of 216 illegal organizations with 1,435 members of Albanian nationality were discovered in the YPA.' Admiral Mamula said ethnic Albanian subversives had been preparing for 'killing officers and soldiers, poisoning food and water, sabotage, breaking into weapons arsenals and stealing arms and ammunition, desertion and causing flagrant nationalist incidents in army units.'" D. Binder, *The New York Times*, November 1, 1987.

⁵⁴⁾ S Woodward, 1995, p. 88.

⁵⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 82

⁵⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵⁷⁾ M, Vickers, 1998, p. 235.

⁵⁸⁾ D. Johstone, *Notes on the Kosovo Problem and the International Community* 59.

⁵⁹⁾ S Woodward, 1995, p. 382. ⁶⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

Internationalization of Kosovo Problem and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia

After the National Assembly of Serbia officially passed the amendments on the republican constitution in March 1989, Albanians in Kosovo organized more violent mass demonstrations in support for their leaders, Vllasi and Jasari, and against Serbia reducing their 1974 constitutional status. Slovenia and Croatia, wanting to become independent states, saw a great opportunity to achieve their goals by supporting Kosovo Albanians separatist demands. In Slovenia a petition was signed by 450,000 citizens condemning federal decision to impose martial law in Kosovo. In February 1989 a mass meeting was organized in Ljubljana to back Albanian miners strike at Stari Trg. Slovenian party leader Milan Kucan, expressed his party's solidarity with Albanian demands" and by doing so he "[...] linked Albanian civil rights with the constitutional principle of territorial sovereignty and the right of secession claimed by Slovenes. "⁶¹⁾ This attitude served well the Slovenian and Croatian leadership to achieve their independence, but otherwise they did not care too much about Albanian population. In fact, as Vickers remarked:

"[...] the outpouring of compassion in Ljubljana for the Kosovars was largely hypocritical [...] This hypocrisy openly manifested itself when Serbia's demands for reform of the Yugoslav Federation were countered by Slovenia and Croatia, which took the side of the Kosovo Albanians. When this ended in their actual secession and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, both quickly lost interest in Kosovo."⁶²⁾

Other important steps were taken by the Slovenian and Croatian leadership to undermine federal unity and weaken Serbia: in October 1987 parliamentary delegations of the two northern republics demonstratively walked out of the federal parliament in refusing to contribute any longer to the federal budget. In late 1989 the two governments decided to withdraw their contingents from federal police units employed in Kosovo; they also began to talk about a confederation model to replace the Yugoslav federation. As a matter of fact, Slovenia and Croatia used Kosovo just as a pretext to accelerate the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Immediately after the Slovenian referendum for independence in December 1990, France Bucar, president of the republican parliament, stated in an *interview*:

"[...] if we were to adopt the position which consists in even.' people's right to live as it wishes and as it is supposed to live, in that case we can not refuse this right to Kosovo. We support the effort of Albanians to create their own state and to declare themselves as they wish, either independent or as a part of Yugoslavia. Albanians from Kosovo are the makers of their own destiny"⁶³⁾

Yet another highly placed politician, Dimitrij Rupel, Slovene foreign minister in 1990, later admitted that the dispute over Kosovo problem was merely a proxy war over the future of Yugoslavia.⁶⁴⁾ Meanwhile, Kosovo Albanians began to receive encouragement from US officials and some European countries. In 1989 US ambassador to the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) Warren Zimmermann was appointed as ambassador to Belgrade, which marked the beginning of the US campaign against Serbia of supposed human rights violation in Kosovo.

Zimmermann was joined by other members of the US Congress, such as Senator Robert Dole, and the representatives of Helsinki Committee. Their *"fact-finding" missions resulted in November 1990 in*

"[...] an amendment offered by Senator Don Nickels to the foreign operations appropriations act that threatened the withdrawal of all US economic assistance and US backing in international financial institutions and markets if improvements did not occur within six months — by May 5, 1991."⁶⁵⁾

The US intervention in Kosovo on the basis of human rights and putting all the blame on Serbia, while Yugoslavia was still functioning as a whole and federal troops were still employed in Kosovo, encouraged not only Albanian but also Slovenian and Croatian separatists. As we already said, the US support to Yugoslavia's integrity was fake. Its concrete actions on the political, diplomatic and economic level were directed in opposite direction. Essentially, the entire US-led international community intervention in Yugoslavia and Kosovo beginning from 1989 served as a further encouragement to Albanian separatist.

"It is worth pointing out that the only reason why the Kosovo Albanians can be so brazen in their claim for independence [...] is because it has become acceptable internationally. It is part of the post-Yugoslav agenda, thanks to the disintegrative dynamics unleashed by Western intervention."⁶⁶⁾

⁶¹⁾ *Ibid*, p. 98.

⁶²⁾ M. Vickers, 1998, p. 242.

⁶³⁾ France Bucar in an interview for *Balkan*, n° 10, April-Jun, 1991, p. 181.

⁶⁴⁾ S. Woodward, 1995, p. 98. ⁶⁵⁾ *Ibid*, p. 151.

⁶⁶⁾ Linda Ryan, *Kosovo: the final act*, commentary published on the LM web site, 2 Jun 1999, p. 4.

Kosovo,s Albanians Phantom State Seeking Recognition

Boosted by the US, Albanians in Kosovo saw a great opportunity to actually proclaim their own Republic. In April 1990 violent protestations of Albanians in Pristina left thirty-one dead and hundreds wounded; federal authorities then removed federal troops letting Serbia take complete charge of Kosovo. When, later that year, Albanian leaders were prevented from gathering by Serbian authorities, on July 2nd they proclaimed the Sovereign Republic of Kosovo within Yugoslavia and its secession from Serbia. The response of Serbian government was to dissolve Kosovo's Assembly and to take over the administrative and executive control through Serbia's National Assembly. Albanian opposition to this decision resulted in a general strike in September 1990, and in a clandestine adoption of the so-called Kacanik constitution. It defined the self-proclaimed Republic of *Kosovo* as a

"[...] democratic state of the Albanian people and of members of other nations and national minorities who are its citizens: Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Turks, Romanians and others living in Kosovo."⁶⁷⁾

Obviously, Serbia could not accept this, and in September 1990 the Serbian constitution was finally adopted. It gave the provinces:

"[...] the usual characteristics of territorial and political autonomy with their own statutes, parliaments elected in general elections, and executive and administrative bodies. Members of ethnic minorities were guaranteed the following collective rights: official use of their mother-tongue, to be educated in their mother-tongue, and freedom of religion"⁶⁸⁾

Serb authorities imposed new emergency administration over Kosovo, undertaking several important steps to regain control in economy, education and media. The decision of Slovenia and Croatia to proclaim secession in June 1991, encouraged Kosovo Albanians to press for an independent state of their own. In order to present themselves to the international community as a state in a making, Albanian leadership organized a clandestine referendum in favor of Kosovo's independence in September 1991, appointing Bujar Bukoshi as Prime Minister. In October 1991, Albania was the first and the only country to recognize this phantom creation as a "sovereign and independent state". However, the European Community (EC) did not approve the demand for recognition of "Kosovo Republic". It was out of the question, given that the EC had already recognized the rights of Slovenia and Croatia to self-determination and declared the internal

borders between Yugoslav republics international and inviolable. In fact, the secession of Croatia and Slovenia was Phase I of the Yugoslav dismemberment. The colonization of Bosnia and Herzegovina was Phase II and nobody from the "international community" could permit this strategy to be spoiled.

This was by no means a discouragement to Albanian separatists. They continued to vie for international support and to proceed with their illegal parallel administration. Bukoshi's 1992 visit to Copenhagen, Vienna and Helsinki, and that of Gjeloši (appointed as 'Deputy Prime Minister') to the Vatican, resulted only in expressions of sympathy for the Albanian cause.⁶⁹⁾ The collusion of the world rulers had no limits. When in May 1992 Albanian political parties organized illegal parliamentary and presidential elections for selfproclaimed "Republic of Kosovo," electing Ibrahim Rugova president, eight monitoring groups from US and Europe were present. The international community continued with its ambiguous attitude toward Kosovo's Albanians, by not officially recognizing their self-proclaimed state, but at the same time keeping their hopes up by not recognizing Serbia's authority over Kosovo either. That was one reason more for Albanians to refuse any possibility to participate in the political solutions within the legal framework of Serbia. When in December 1992 republican elections were held, Albanians boycotted them, even though they had been encouraged by the international community to vote for American citizen Milan Panic (Yugoslav Prime Minister at the time and US protege). Those Albanians who dared to come to vote were accused by LDK as traitors. Many authors share the opinion that at this point Albanians could have changed the outcome of the elections in their favor if they had only *exercised their voting rights. But,*

"[...] the Albanians wanted to have things both ways - they refused to participate in the elections but then complained that they were being represented by non-elected individuals —and war criminals/⁷⁰⁾

One can only speculate what could have been the long-term benefits for Kosovo if Albanians decided to participate in political institutions of Serbia. They could have, for example:

"[...] elected an important number of representatives to the Serbian Parliament, and altered the political balance of power in Belgrade. Instead, they have missed out on contributing to the beginnings of multi-party democracy in Serbia and seriously crippled its development. [...] It is highly doubtful that holding parallel elections for ethnic Albanians only, resulting in unanimous election of an unchallenged leader, Ibrahim Rugova, and of election of a 'parliament' which has never functioned, provides a better initiation into democratic political practice than could have been gained by using the official elections to further the interests of the Albanian people of Kosovo within the Republic of Serbia"⁷¹⁾

⁶⁷⁾ M. Vickers, 1998, str. 245.

⁶⁸⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 245

⁶⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁷⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁷¹⁾ D. Johnstone, *Notes on the Kosovo Problem and...*, p. 12.

Escalation of Kosovo Conflict after Dayton

In the meantime, United States began more actively to pursue their campaign for human rights in Kosovo. Even with the revival of violence and assassinations against Serbs organized by newly emerging Albanian terrorist groups, US policy was putting all the blame on Serb authorities, while denying them the right to use the legal means at their disposal to suppress this violence. In fact, president Bush warned Milosevic that:

"In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper"⁷²⁾

With the 1992 recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state, US policy openly opted for Yugoslav dismemberment. The final blow was the US military intervention in August and September 1995. Serb areas in Bosnia were bombarded by NATO to force Bosnian Serbs to sign a peace deal for the region. Although it was presented as a peaceful solution for Bosnia war, Dayton agreement was also a stage for further escalation of Kosovo conflict.

The ethnic partition of Bosnia finalized by Dayton agreement in December 1995 gave hopes to Albanians that by the same principle their selfproclaimed ethnic state could also be recognized. But, at the moment, Kosovo not being the central issue for the international community, it has been barely mentioned in Dayton accords as a question of autonomy and human rights within the framework of Serbia. For Albanian separatists returning to the question of autonomy within Serbia was like waving a red flag in front of their face. That was simply not an option, as Bukoshi declared *soon after*:

"[...] autonomy for Kosovo is not an equitable and lasting solution, and therefore it will not be accepted. In this context, the Government [of the Republic of Kosovo] reiterates its stance that it will only be bound by the express will of the population of Kosovo for an independent republic and will work to this end only"⁷³⁾

Profoundly disappointed by the outcome of Dayton agreement, which actually committed to recognition of FRY borders and thus to the status of Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia, Albanian separatists began increasingly to resort to violence and terrorist attacks. In April 1995 Albanians attacked a Serbian border patrol near the Albanian -Kosovo frontier, killing one and severely wounding two border guards; in August a group of armed men attacked with bombs a Serb police station at canjari, wounding two policemen. The well-organized, long-time planned Albanian guerrilla war was underway. The armed groups such as Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) or National Movement for the Liberation of Kosova (LKCK) were only the continuation of a long-time existing underground Albanian separatist movement. These groups openly pledged for violent means to achieve their goal, in opposition to Ibrahim Rugova and his leading LDK party, who insisted on non-violent struggle. The situation even grew worse after some European countries officially recognized FRY in 1996.

"in 1996, there were 31 political assassinations in Kosovo. The targets were Serb officials but also ethnic Albanians condemned as 'collaborators' the better to destroy the last bridges between two communities. The pace quickened in 1997, with 55 assassinations. While Rugova was claiming that the UCK was a figment of Serb propaganda, guerrillas raided eleven police stations in coordinated attacks in September 1997 before making first public appearance, armed, uniformed and masked, before a crowd of 20,000 at a funeral on 28 November 1997. In January 1998, a UCK statement issued in Pristina announced that the battle for unification of Kosovo with Albania had begun. The number of killings escalated, with 66 killed before the massive Serbian police operation against guerrilla bases in Drenica region in early March 1998. No government on earth could be expected to remain passive in the face of armed bands that have claimed 152 lives in a little over two years - least of all the government in Washington"⁷⁴⁾

These murderous attacks have hardly been mentioned in the Western media. On the other hand, the US increased its pressure on Serbian authorities to resolve the issue by giving greater

concessions to Kosovo Albanians. In order to control more closely the events in the region, US government opened its Information Office in *Pristina in June 1996, with intention to:*

"[...] reconfirm the State Department's insistence that Belgrade must show substantial progress in solving the Kosovo problem before the 'outer wall' of sanctions imposed on Yugoslavia could be removed"⁷⁵⁾

There was also an American delegation from the US Committee in the OSCE with a monitoring mission in the province. Meanwhile, the Albanian lobby in the US which was established already in the 1980s, intensified its campaign in the 1990s with significant success. The center of this lobbying in 1980s were Republicans Joseph DioGuardi and Senator Robert Dole. In 1996 the Albanian lobby shifted its field of interest to Democrats. One of the most important programs of Clinton's 1996 election campaign, called "Ethnic Outreach", consisted in establishing several steering committees to concentrate on ethnic lobbies, especially to Albanian and Croatian ones. It is not by chance that an Albanian American, Ilir Zherka, was put in charge of the program.⁷⁶⁾ As Diane Johnstone observed, ethnic lobbies come very 'handy' to politicians, offering them not only large contributions for their campaign but providing also a semblance of an 'idealistic cause' they apparently fight for. In fact, US leaders could not care less about the Albanian cause; US officials repeatedly stated that the independence of Kosovo was out of the question. What they were really trying to do by encouraging Albanian separatists was to escalate the conflict in Kosovo to destabilize Serbia and finally destroy (or take control over) what was left of the former Yugoslavia: the FRY, considered as 'the last bastion of oldfashioned independence in the Balkans'.⁷⁷⁾

⁷²⁾ President Bush in *New York Times*, 28 December 1992.

⁷³⁾ Bujar Bukoshi's statement on 31 October 1995, quoted in M. Vickers, 1998, p. 287

⁷⁴⁾ D. Johnstone, *Notes on the Kosovo Problem and...*, p. 8. ⁷⁵⁾ M. Vickers, 1998, p. 297.

⁷⁶⁾ D. Johnstone, *Hawks and Eagles...*, 1999.

⁷⁷⁾ *Ibid.*

The Final Stage: 'Bombing into Submission'

With the mounting violence taking its toll of the rapidly growing number of victims, authorities and civilians, Serbs and Albanians, the Serbian government had to do something to crush the terrorist organizations. After four Serb policemen were killed in an ambush by UCK in February 1998, Serb forces started a counterinsurgency operation. Following fierce fighting in Drenica village where 25 people were killed (February 28, 1998), thousands of Albanians took to the streets of Pristina to protest against the Serbian counteroffensive. The developments in Kosovo provoked the almost immediate reaction of NATO and EU, with emergency meetings and threats issued to Serbian regime that the sanctions will be tightened if the fighting is not stopped. However, even if the threatening to Milosevic's regime got more serious, there was no open encouragement to UCK fighters neither. We already stressed in the Part One that this attitude left both sides thinking that the international community looks favorable on their *struggle*.

"While denouncing Serbia's repressive policy and threatening military retaliation, Washington maintains that Kosovo must remain part of Serbia. US envoy to Balkans Robert Gelbard had denounced the Kosovo Liberation Army as 'terrorists'. The effect has been to encourage both sides and thereby make full-scale war more likely"⁷⁸⁾

Throughout 1998 Albanian separatists stepped up their guerrilla war with ambushes, assassinations, murders, kidnappings and threats aimed not only at Serb authorities, but also at civilians, both Serb and Albanian (those who were considered 'traitors'). According to the Serbian government, between January 1, 1998 and August 30, 1998, there were 1126 Albanian terrorist attacks in Kosovo, out of which in 616 cases the targets were Serb police forces and in 510 cases the targets were civilians. In the attacks on the police forces, 74 policemen were killed and 282 wounded, and in the attacks against civilians there were 81 dead and 95 wounded.⁷⁹⁾ As a result, Serbian government intensified its military crackdown on Albanian guerrilla. Armed conflicts between two parties became more frequent and violent, claiming many more deaths on both sides. Still, even with recognizing Serb victims, the policy of the United States was to put all the pressure on Serbian government. Threats especially came from US and NATO leadership, who referred to the 1995 bombing of Serbs in Bosnia as the only 'diplomatic language' that Milosevic's regime can understand. At this point, the stage for the upcoming US-led military intervention has already been set through rushed-up meetings in the United Nations, NATO command and the G-8 contact group. In October 1998, with the Serb military offensive being several months underway and almost on the verge of ceasing, the US government dispatched its special envoy Richard Holbrooke to Belgrade to offer a deal. The proposal consisted essentially in a political settlement which would keep Kosovo inside Serbia, but would also provide a discussion over Kosovo's independence after a three-year period. It further stipulated a system of councils based on 'national communities' that would give Albanians and Serbs a series of veto rights to any decision that concerned their 'vital interests'. This proposal was patterned after the Dayton agreement which in fact institutionalized the carving-up of Bosnia.⁸⁰⁾ No wonder that neither Serb nor Albanian side were willing to accept the offer. To stress their decisiveness, NATO allies authorized air strikes against Yugoslavia ("We have to be very, very strong here. We saw in Bosnia what works in dealing with Mr. Milosevic", said President Clinton in October 1998,⁸¹⁾ and NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana added: "We have to maintain this pressure", meaning the threat of military intervention⁸²⁾. At a news conference on 12 October Solana announced NATO Council decision to activate execution orders within 96 hours. Even with international community recognizing that both Serbs and Albanians were engaged in the conflict, the ultimatum was directed only to one side, the Serbian, which was held solely responsible for the beginning and for the outcome of the conflict.

The nine-day talks between President Milosevic and US special envoy Holbrooke, underscored with 'arguments' of airstrikes ultimatum, finally resulted in an agreement on October 13, 1998. The deal included a significant withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from Kosovo, letting in an international verification mission under OSCE auspices and the return of all refugees. However, despite compliance on the Serb side, all the means of pressure still remained in place: neither the 'outer waif' of sanctions against Yugoslavia nor the military threat have been lifted. In order to justify the discriminatory measures only against the Serbian side, the highest US officials proclaimed Milosevic as a man that should not be trusted because of his past 'intransigence' (words of President Clinton) and Serbian people in general as irrational, paranoiac and untouched by *human suffering*.

"The Western mistake over the previous four years had been to treat the Serbs as rational people with whom one could argue, negotiate, compromise, and agree. In fact, they respected only force or an unambiguous and credible threat to use it"⁸³⁾

declared Richard Holbrooke.

With Yugoslav security forces withdrawing, under the watchful eye of the international verifiers, and with NATO air strikes still threatening the Serbian side in case of any 'wrong' move, Albanian separatist saw the opportunity to gather momentum. So they bet all their money on one 'horse': to provoke NATO intervention. In any case, they surely did not hide their intentions: during mass demonstrations Albanian nationalists carried placards reading "NATO, where are you?", and their own representative of 'nonviolent' approach, Ibrahim Rugova, called for NATO troops to be sent into Kosovo as the only way to save ethnic Albanians from Serb 'terror'. When the first international verifiers arrived to the province in early November 1998, they were supposed to monitor the implementation of Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement on both sides. It turned out instead that they only supervised the Yugoslav side compliance with a cease-fire. If the fighting renewed, there were no reprisals on UCK for not keeping their part of the bargain. Earlier in October, Albanian side already rejected Serb proposal to hold elections in the province within nine months after Holbrooke-Milosevic deal enforcement. The UCK leaders claimed that it was just another Serb attempt to dictate their own terms. When in November Albanian separatists re-launched their guerrilla attacks, OSCE observers did nothing to stop them. In fact, many doubts have been raised about the contingent of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM). The head of the mission was US appointed William Walker, well known for his support of the Contra guerrillas in the war against Sandinista Nicaragua. Further on, it was widely assumed that many of the verifiers were agents of various NATO intelligence services, especially US military or civilian intelligence.⁸⁴⁾ So it was no great surprise that, after the KVM reported the renewal of fighting, the US again sent envoy Holbrooke to put additional pressure on Serb government only to stop the conflict.

In December 1998, it was already clear that the cease-fire agreement had collapsed. At one occasion, Albanian terrorists opened fire on a cafe in Pec, killing six Serb youths who were playing pool. Then, in a confrontation of Albanian rebels and Yugoslav border guards 36 ethnic Albanians were killed. It was just one of many attempts of Albanian rebels to illegally cross the border from Albania to Kosovo, smuggling arms and ammunition to UCK fighters. In January 1999, after Albanians killed three Serb policemen, firing an anti-tank weapon at their armored vehicle, and then took eight Yugoslav soldiers as hostages, even the OSCE observers got involved in trying to negotiate the soldiers' release. Gabriel Keller of the OSCE mission, commenting on the escalation of violence, admitted that the KLA (UCK) was responsible for most provocations.⁸⁵⁾ However, it was the so-called "Racak massacre" that was used as a pretext to issue a direct threat of NATO military intervention in Kosovo. On 16 January 1999, 40 bodies of ethnic Albanians were found lined up in a ditch near the village of Racak, apparently massacred, shot in the head and base of the skull at close range. The day before there was some heavy fighting between Serb forces and Albanian guerrillas in Racak, the well known stronghold of the UCK. Serb police and army units were deployed in an offensive to crack down on the Albanian rebels. The whole operation was directly monitored by OSCE observers and even by a television team of the Associated Press, who were safely installed on a nearby hill. At the end of the offensive, Serbian forces reported at least 15 UCK fighters killed and a large stock of weapons seized. Afterwards, some French journalists as well as a group of verifiers were allowed to drive through the village, which seemed calm and deserted. It was only the next morning that the gruesome discovery of 40 lined-up bodies was reported. In the meantime, UCK fighters retook

the village. It was they who discovered the ditch and who led a group of OSCE verifiers to the spot, together with the KVM chief William Walker. He immediately accused the Serb forces and the Yugoslav army of being the perpetrators of the 'massacre', with no previous investigation whatsoever. Many European journalists denounced in a matter of few days the whole Racak 'massacre' as a setup.⁸⁶⁾ But the damage to the Serb side had already been done.

⁷⁸⁾ Bill Vann, *How US policy has laid the basis for a wider war in the Balkans*, article on the World Socialist Web Site, 17 March 1998.

⁷⁹⁾ Official site of the government of the FRY.

⁸⁰⁾ Bill Vann, *US, NATO threaten new bombing campaign against Serbia*, World Socialist Web Site, 8 October, 1998. ⁸¹⁾ *Ibid*

⁸²⁾ CNN World News, October 12, 1998, 9:47 p.m.

⁸³⁾ Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, Random House, 1998.

⁸⁴⁾ D. Johnstone, *Hawks and Eagles...*, 1999

⁸⁵⁾ CNN World News, January 8, 1999, 7:19 p.m.

⁸⁶⁾ On the Racak massacre set-up, see the revealing articles of Renaud Girard in *Le Figaro*, January 20, 1999, and Christophe Chatelot in *Le Monde*, January 20, 1999.

The Rambouillet trap

The 'outrage' of the international community over the Racak 'massacre' provided a good justification for pressuring Yugoslavia to accept a 'peace settlement', a deal that would legitimize NATO occupation of Kosovo. Diplomats from the six-nation Contact Group precipitated the preparation of an interim political settlement; the idea was to create a "Dayton-styled lockup under incredible international pressure", as one NATO official stated.⁸⁷⁾ US and European envoys began to meet separately with Serb and Albanian representatives to prepare the terrain for the upcoming negotiations. But even before the setting-up of the Contact Group meeting, US officials insisted that NATO should issue a detailed military warning to Serbia; in fact, it was the US condition for attending any future discussions.

The first round of "negotiations" started on 6 February, 1999, at Rambouillet near Paris. During the talks the impression was given, largely by the Western media, that the two sides were standing on such antagonistic positions that neither could accept the deal. It was said that the Albanians wanted a referendum on independence after a three-year period, which was unacceptable to Serbs, and that the Serbs wanted a guarantee that Yugoslav borders would remain intact, which was rejected by Albanians. In fact, it was soon discovered that the whole negotiating process was a set-up. What really went on in Rambouillet, was that the draft agreement presented to both sides had been deliberately conceived in such a manner as to be clearly unacceptable to the Serb negotiators. Two high US officials, George Kenney, a former State Department Yugoslavia desk officer, and Jim Jatras, a foreign policy aid to Senate Republicans, confirmed the following statement of a senior State Department official:

"We intentionally set the bar too high for the Serbs to comply. They need some bombing, and that's what they are going to get."⁸⁸⁾

The US objective was to make sure that Serbs would not sign the peace proposal, thus providing a pretext for NATO military intervention. The plan had already been made how to deploy some 30,000 US-led NATO troops in Kosovo. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as well as NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana repeatedly demanded during the negotiations that any political agreement must be implemented by a NATO-led force. To increase the military

pressure during the talks some 430 aircraft were placed on combat alert in different European locations. There is no sovereign country that could ever sign such a deal which legitimates a presence of occupation forces on its territory. So when the Serb side refused to comply with such conditions, Yugoslavia was immediately accused of blocking the Rambouillet talks and presented in the media as the main obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

But, what about the Albanians' apparent refusal to the peace plan? How come the KLA (UCK) was reluctant to agree to the best offer that they could ever hope for with a NATO-led military force to guarantee the implementation and a decision on the final status of Kosovo (which practically meant independence) in a three-year period? It was a separatist's once in a lifetime chance, and curiously enough, it was! Some facts surrounding the process of the negotiations reveal quite clearly that the apparent Albanian reluctance was merely a hoax. Actually, it was important that the Albanians at the beginning refuse the proposed agreement. The fact that the proposal was to be contested by both sides rendered credibility to it as a seemingly righteous political agreement that treated both parties equally. This was, in turn, concealing the simple truth: that the 'peace deal' was intentionally made to be unacceptable only to the Serbian side. Otherwise, it would be too obvious if the Albanians agreed instantaneously, and the Serbs did not. Furthermore, it was not by chance that the Albanian representatives were from the beginning almost exclusively guided by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. She seemed to have a "noble mission" to be their personal adviser throughout the 'negotiations'. It is important to notice that the Serb and Albanian delegation never negotiated directly with each other during the 17 days of talks. An ostensible "ultimatum" was given to the Albanian delegation by Albright: either you sign or you lose all American backing and we cut off your supplies; but if you do sign, and the Serbs don't, they will be bombed and you will be guaranteed our strong support.⁸⁹) This was a highly comical statement because Albright never actually wanted to threaten the Albanians. What the US wanted was the military deployment of US-led NATO forces in Yugoslavia, and on this point the Albanians could not agree more. So, there was never any dispute between US officials and the Albanians. They closely collaborated from the very beginning in setting up Yugoslavia.

The set-up became much more evident when it was revealed that there were two "agreement" documents, one of which the Serbian side was prepared to sign. The political part of "agreement" granted autonomy for Kosovo, and the "implementation agreement", which defined the use of international peacekeepers—in fact NATO troops—to carry out the political deal. The Serbian side agreed to the political deal, but it firmly rejected the implementation deal leading to a foreign military (NATO) occupation of Kosovo. Within the Rambouillet "negotiations", the Serb delegation expressed its willingness to consider an international peacekeeping force deployment. Its only condition was that the peacekeepers should not be placed under NATO command, but rather under UN or OSCE auspices, both organizations being non-military. Albright ridiculed that idea saying:

"We accept nothing less than a complete agreement, including a NATO-led force [...] The Serbs have been acting as if there are two documents, but they can't pick and choose. There is *no* way to have the political document without the implementation force that has to be NATO-led.... If they are not willing to engage on the military and police chapters, there is no agreement."⁹⁰)

This was just a crude ultimatum coming from the US leadership: either the implementation deal, or no deal at all! At the end of the first round of "talks" at Rambouillet, neither the Albanian

nor Serbian side could agree on a settlement. However, the Albanians 'suddenly' decided to change their mind, and on 23 February they declared being ready to sign the document after some 'technical consultations' with their people in Kosovo. These "technical details" meant in fact the stepping-up of the guerilla war, aimed at forcing the Serbian military into mounting a wide-scale counter-offensive, and thus provide a supplementary 'reason' for NATO intervention. This was probably the strategy made up in collaboration with US Secretary of state Albright. So, between the end of the Rambouillet talks on 24 February and a new conference that should have taken place in France on 15 March, the KLA intensified its guerilla attacks. Serb police units, their stations and vehicles were attacked, ambushed and shelled, causing even more deaths of police officer and civilians. When the talks resumed in Paris on 15 March, the Albanian representatives confirmed their compliance with both the political and military agreement. The Yugoslav delegation, while considering the political settlement acceptable, once more resolutely opposed the peace implementation deal, by not allowing a NATO-led force into Kosovo. "Foreign troops have no business in our country", President Milosevic declared to TANJUG news agency, confirming that Yugoslavia considered a NATO deployment as a violation of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. As it would later turn out, after the full text of the Rambouillet-Paris agreement was revealed, the accord contained such provisions that would have subjected not only Kosovo, but the whole of Yugoslavia to a virtual NATO occupation. Appendix B, Status of MultiNational Military Implementation Force, granted NATO the freedom to move its troops all over the country. Article 8 of the Appendix reads:

"NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, maneuver, *billet*, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations. "91)

Furthermore, Article 6 guaranteed absolute immunity of NATO personnel from Yugoslav jurisdiction for any offense they commit. By Article 10 NATO is exempt from paying anything to Yugoslavia for the use of all the facilities it needs, such as streets, buildings, airports and sports. As to the commanding staff, the Civilian Chief of Implementation Mission and the military Commander of KFOR (Kosovo force which is directly subject to NATO), are made practically the rulers and final authorities in Kosovo. Once again, it is hard to see how any sovereign country would willingly sign away its authority in governing its own territory. The final decision on the 'peace deal' was discussed in the Serbian parliament which on March 23 rejected the military part of the plan. However, the members of the Assembly showed willingness to consider the deployment of international peacekeepers in Kosovo. Of course, that was not enough for the US-led international community to reconsider military intervention. On March 24 1999, the bombardment of Yugoslavia by NATO began.

⁸⁷⁾ CNN World News, January 26, 1999, 1:04 p.m.

⁸⁸⁾ Seth Ackerman, *What reporters knew about Kosovo talks - but didn't tell*, FAIR Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting), June 2, 1999.

⁸⁹⁾ CNN, World News, February 15, 1999, 10:12 p.m.

⁹⁰⁾ Seth Ackerman, *Forgotten Coverage of Rambouillet Negotiations: Was a peaceful Kosovo Solution Rejected by U.S.* ? FAIR, May 14, 1999

⁹¹⁾ Quoted by Peter Schwarz in *Rambouillet Accord foresaw the occupation of all Yugoslavia*, World Socialist Web Site, 14. April 1999.